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C O N F I D E N T I A L VILNIUS 000522

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STATE FOR EUR/NB

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TAGS: UN KPAL PREL LH

SUBJECT: GAERC: GOL TO RAISE EURO, ENLARGEMENT

REF: A. STATE 91167 B. VILNIUS 501

Classified By: Pol/Econ officer Traver Gudie for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶11. (C) We delivered reftel points to Tomas Gulbinas, Head of the MFA's Common Foreign Policy and Security Division, June 6. Gulbinas told us that the June 12 GAERC would concentrate less on external affairs and more on "future of Europe" questions. Lithuania plans to intervene, he said, to encourage an "open doors" enlargement policy and to protest the European Commission's May 16 report that likely precludes Lithuania's entry into the eurozone in 2007. (On the former issue, Presidential Foreign Policy Advisor Simonas Satunas told us June 6 that there is an increasing frustration within the GOL that the EU's doors are closed to aspirant countries in Eastern Europe like Ukraine.) Gulbinas does not expect the Minister to intervene on any external issue.

¶12. (U) The following reflects Gulbinas's responses to the reftel points on external relations.

IRAQ

¶13. (C) Gulbinas said that the GOL strongly supports increased EU assistance to Iraq, and is planning to direct EUR 40,000 of its international assistance money to Iraq in 2006. Gulbinas confirmed that the GOL is considering a high-level visit, possibly the Minister of Defense, to Iraq in the fall, confirming what other Ministry officials have told us (ref C). Lithuania's Prime Minister's office issued a statement of support for the new Iraqi government on May 25 (ref B).

PALESTINIAN ASSISTANCE

¶14. (C) Gulbinas told us that Lithuania supports a new mechanism for delivering aid to the Palestinian people that does not give fiscal or economic aid to the Hamas-led government. In a separate meeting June 5, Jurate Ramoskiene of the MFA's Middle East department said that European structures were having trouble agreeing on a draft mechanism paper. She also said that Lithuania was one of five countries most closely supporting the U.S. position that assistance must be directed at humanitarian needs only and not controlled in any way by institutions of the Palestinian Authority.

Balkans

¶15. (C) Lithuania strongly supports EU engagement with Serbia and strongly agrees with the USG view that Serbia must see a future as part of Euro-Atlantic institutions. Gulbinas said

that the Minister would make reference to the need for an "open doors" policy in the Balkans during his intervention on enlargement.

CUBA

¶6. (C) Gulbinas said that Lithuania would not intervene on Cuba, but added that he expected the EU's Common Position on Cuba would be renewed for another year and that the Ministers will make a corresponding statement condemning recent human rights abuses of Castro's regime.

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